



# **LGBT Action Plan: Improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people**

Presented to Parliament

by the Minister for Women and Equalities

by Command of Her Majesty

July 2018

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# Contents

Contents.....	3
Ministerial foreword .....	4
Executive summary .....	5
Funding for the delivery of this plan.....	7
Health.....	8
Education .....	11
Safety .....	14
Workplace .....	19
Rights and the law.....	21
Data and monitoring .....	23
Representation.....	25
International .....	27
Next steps .....	29

## Ministerial foreword

This Government is committed to making the UK a country that works for everyone. We want to strip away the barriers that hold people back so that everyone can go as far as their hard work and talent can take them.

The UK today is a diverse and tolerant society. We have made great strides in recent decades to support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, who make a vital contribution to our culture and to our economy.

This Government has a proud record in advancing equality for LGBT people. From changing the law to allow same-sex couples to marry to introducing the world's first transgender action plan in 2011, we have been at the forefront of change. The UK has consistently been recognised as one of the best countries for LGBT rights in Europe.

Yet despite these advances, we know that LGBT people continue to face significant barriers to full participation in public life. The LGBT survey that I have published today demonstrates this clearly. The survey, the largest national of LGBT people ever conducted in the world to date, substantially improves our understanding of the barriers that hold LGBT back. It also serves as a call to action.

One statistic alone speaks volumes. Two-thirds of respondents said they had avoided holding their same-sex partner's hand in public for fear of a negative reaction. Holding hands with someone you love should be one of the simplest things in the world; not a source of fear or hesitation. There were difficult findings in other areas, such as safety, health, education and employment. We have more work to do.

That is why I am pleased that one of my first acts as the new Minister for Women and Equalities is to publish this comprehensive LGBT Action Plan. With over 75 commitments, the cross-Government plan sets out how we will improve the lives of LGBT people over the course of this Parliament. Some of the key actions include:

- Appointing a national LGBT health adviser to provide leadership on reducing the health inequalities that LGBT people face;
- Extending the anti-homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying programme in schools;
- Bringing forward proposals to end the practice of conversion therapy in the UK; and
- Taking further action on LGBT hate crime – improving the recording and reporting of, and police response to, hate crime.

As a Stonewall LGBT Ally, I have been proud to stand up for LGBT people and I was delighted to be appointed as Minister for Women and Equalities so that I could play a greater role in this agenda. I am determined to help make the UK a country that works for LGBT people because no matter what your gender identity or sexual orientation is, you should be able to reach your full potential.

**Rt. Hon. Penny Mordaunt**

Minister for Women and Equalities

## Executive summary

1. **In July 2017, the Government launched a national survey of LGBT people.** The survey was open to anyone who identified as having a minority sexual orientation, gender identity or had variations in sex characteristics.<sup>1</sup> It asked questions about people's experiences of living in the UK and in accessing public services. We asked questions about education, healthcare, personal safety and employment.
2. **The survey received more than 108,000 responses, making it the largest national survey of its kind anywhere in the world.** This response was unprecedented, and it was a significant undertaking to analyse the results. We have now published the results from the national LGBT survey, and we hope that the findings will be a valuable resource, not only for government, but also for everyone working to support LGBT people.
3. **The Government is committed to taking bold action on the results of the survey.** This 'LGBT Action Plan' explains how we will advance the rights of LGBT people both at home and abroad, and improve the way that public services work for them. Our vision is for everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics, to be able to live safe, happy and healthy lives where they can be themselves without fear of discrimination.
4. **We will establish an 'LGBT Implementation Fund' to deliver this action plan.** The Government Equalities Office will allocate £4.5 million of funding, which will be available until the end of the Spending Review period in March 2020, and will seek additional funding in future years. This funding will be used to deliver the commitments in this plan, and enable public, private and voluntary sector organisations to deliver projects that respond to the findings from the survey.
5. **We will ensure that LGBT people's needs are at the heart of the National Health Service.** Our survey showed that LGBT people feel their specific needs go unaddressed when accessing healthcare. We will appoint a National Adviser to provide leadership on reducing the health inequalities that LGBT people face, and we will seek to establish a more modern care model for adult gender identity services in England.
6. **We will act so that every child and young person feels safe in education, and can achieve their potential.** Our survey found that our education system is not preparing LGBT young people for later life, and that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is a problem we still need to tackle. We will continue to invest in programmes that tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools, and ensure that the new subjects of

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<sup>1</sup> When we say 'LGBT people' we mean anyone who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, or who has another minority sexual orientation or gender identity, or who are intersex.

Relationships Education, and Relationships and Sex Education will support pupils, whatever their developing sexual orientation or gender identity.

7. **We will act so that LGBT people feel safe in their own homes and in their communities.** Our survey shows that many LGBT people do not report hate incidents they experience and that the abhorrent practice of conversion therapy is still alive in our country. We will bring forward proposals to end the practice of conversion therapy in the UK, and take further action on hate crime as part of our upcoming refresh of the 2016 Hate Crime Action Plan.
8. **We will ensure transgender people are treated with dignity and respect.** Our survey showed dissatisfaction with the gender recognition process. We will immediately consult on reforming the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and consider how best to make the gender recognition process less bureaucratic and intrusive.
9. **We will improve our understanding of the issues faced by people who identify as non-binary and people who are intersex.** Our survey gave us new insight into the experiences of these groups, but we have more to learn. We will launch separate Calls for Evidence on the issues faced by non-binary and intersex people.
10. **We will trial innovative ways of tackling deep-seated prejudices in our communities.** Our survey showed that many LGBT people are not comfortable with the simple act of holding their partner's hand in front of others. We will work across the public, private and voluntary sectors to improve the representation of LGBT people in public life, championing role models and giving people the confidence to be themselves in public.
11. **We will deliver the commitments set out in this document by the end of this Parliament.** We will listen to the needs of LGBT people and the LGBT sector organisations that support them as we deliver this plan, and establish a new LGBT Advisory Panel to guide our work and hold us to account. We will also provide regular updates to Parliament on our progress.
12. **Whilst this is a national action plan, it covers some policy areas that are devolved.** It will have varying levels of effect across the four nations of the UK, owing to existing devolution arrangements.
13. **Everyone in this country should feel safe and happy to be who they are, and to love who they love, without judgement or fear.** All people, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, should be supported to reach their full potential. This action plan sets out the ways in which the Government hopes to move closer to that goal.

## Funding for the delivery of this plan

14. **The national LGBT survey has highlighted a variety of areas where improvements could be made to support LGBT people.** Some of these improvements can only be made by government; others could be achieved through partnership with organisations that specialise in working with LGBT people. We want the scale of the response to meet the scale of the challenge set out in the national LGBT survey results, and that means we need a coordinated approach across the public, private and voluntary sectors.
15. **The national LGBT survey highlighted that respondents found LGBT-specific charities particularly helpful when seeking support.** LGBT organisations and charities were viewed as the most helpful when handling the most serious incidents experienced by respondents in a number of areas. For example, 77% of those who reported an incident in education to an LGBT organisation or charity said that they had found them very or somewhat helpful.
16. **We want to ensure that LGBT organisations and charities are supported to continue to deliver services that LGBT people rely on.** We also want to make the most of their expertise in the design and delivery of government's work, and ensure the LGBT charities sector is put on a sustainable footing. We also want to work with other kinds of organisations, like academic institutions, to ensure we have access to the best possible research and evidence.

### What we will do

17. **We will make available £4.5 million to deliver commitments in this action plan and other projects, through an 'LGBT Implementation Fund'.** The funding will initially run until March 2020. Some of this funding will be used to deliver projects within government. The remainder will be made available to public, private and voluntary sector organisations to deliver projects to support LGBT people. The Government Equalities Office will manage the funding, and decide how money is allocated to projects. More details will be released soon.
18. **We intend to secure additional funding after March 2020.** The Government Equalities Office will work with other departments and LGBT sector organisations to build a business case for further investment in initiatives to improve outcomes for LGBT people.
19. **We will also provide support to small LGBT charities and organisations looking to diversify their funding as part of this package.** This will focus on improving the skills small organisations have to enable them to better support their users.

## Health

20. **Your sexual orientation or gender identity can have a significant impact on your physical, mental and sexual health and wellbeing.** Existing evidence shows that health outcomes are generally worse for LGBT people than the rest of the population, and that LGBT people feel that their specific needs are not taken into account in their care<sup>2</sup>.
21. **The national LGBT survey asked questions about people's experiences of public healthcare in the 12 months preceding the survey.** We asked questions about people's access to physical, mental and sexual health services, and gender identity services. We also asked whether they had disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity to healthcare staff, and how they felt this affected their care.
22. **While many respondents to the survey said they had a positive experience accessing healthcare, there is clearly more to do.** Our survey showed that large numbers of respondents had difficulty accessing healthcare services and especially gender identity clinics. It also showed many respondents had experienced inappropriate questioning and curiosity from healthcare staff, and that some respondents feel their specific needs were ignored or not taken into account when accessing healthcare. Some of the most important findings include:
  - a. at least 16% of survey respondents who accessed or tried to access public health services had a negative experience because of their sexual orientation, and at least 38% had a negative experience because of their gender identity
  - b. 51% of survey respondents who accessed or tried to access mental health services said they had to wait too long, 27% were worried, anxious or embarrassed about going and 16% said their GP was not supportive.
  - c. 80% of trans respondents who accessed or tried to access gender identity clinics said it was not easy, with long waiting times the most common barrier.
23. **We will ensure that LGBT people's needs are at the heart of the National Health Service.** We want LGBT people to easily access healthcare when they need it most, and feel comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity so that they get the best possible care.

## What we will do

24. **We will appoint a National Adviser to lead improvements to LGBT healthcare.** The National Adviser will focus on reducing the health inequalities

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<sup>2</sup> NIESR (2016), 'Inequality among lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender groups in the UK July 2016'

that LGBT people face, and advise on ways to improve the care LGBT people receive when accessing the NHS and public health services. They will work across the NHS to ensure that the needs of LGBT people are considered throughout the health system.

25. **The National Adviser will work to improve healthcare professionals' awareness of LGBT issues so they can provide better patient care.** The National Adviser will work with relevant statutory organisations and professional associations to embed LGBT issues into physical and mental health services.
26. **We will improve the way gender identity services work for transgender adults.** In 2019, NHS England will decide on the future configuration of adult gender identity services in England, and will seek to establish a more modern care model that delivers high quality outcomes in which clinical capacity can be more flexibly deployed. The Government Equalities Office will produce advice about the Gender Recognition Act for GP surgeries and gender identity clinics.
27. **We will improve our understanding of the impacts on children and adolescents of changing their gender.** The Government Equalities Office will gather evidence on the issues faced by people assigned female at birth who transition in adolescence.
28. **We will take action to improve mental healthcare for LGBT people.** The Department of Health and Social Care and the Government Equalities Office will jointly develop a plan focussed on reducing suicides amongst the LGBT population. The Department of Health and Social Care will ensure LGBT people's needs are addressed in the updated Suicide Prevention Strategy, and the new Health Education England suicide prevention competency framework will cover high-risk groups including LGBT people.
29. **We will enhance fertility services for LGBT people.** The Department for Health and Social Care will revise surrogacy legislation so single people (including LGBT individuals) can access legal parenthood after a surrogacy arrangement.
30. **We will ensure LGBT people's needs are taken into account in health and social care regulation.** The Care Quality Commission will continue to improve how it inspects the experience of LGBT people in adult social care and mental health in-patient wards, and we will begin to inspect all gender identity clinics on a risk basis. The Care Quality Commission will develop guidance for care quality inspectors on the healthcare pathway for people who are transitioning their gender, and embed LGBT equality issues into the methodology used by inspectors.
31. **We will support improved monitoring of sexual orientation and gender identity in healthcare services to enable better patient care.** The Government Equalities Office will develop best practice guidance for monitoring and make this openly available to the public sector, and the National Adviser will work to ensure healthcare professionals understand the benefits of asking

patients about their sexual orientation and gender identity. The Care Quality Commission will look at how we can promote the NHS England voluntary sexual orientation monitoring standard for people using health and social care services.

32. **We will work to tackle body image pressures that LGBT young people face.** The Government Equalities Office will consider the specific challenges faced by LGBT people as part of our broader work to build the evidence base on the causes and impacts of body dissatisfaction.
33. **We will continue to review the blood donation deferral period for men who have sex with men.** NHS Blood and Transplant will explore ways that a more personalised risk assessment can be introduced, to allow more people to donate blood without impacting on blood safety; currently there is very little data on effective ways of carrying out such risk assessments. The initial scoping, evidence gathering and testing may take up to two years to complete.
34. **We are committed to tackling HIV transmission, AIDS and HIV-related deaths.** As part of this, we are currently funding a 3 year trial with 10,000 people to determine how best to deliver 'PrEP'. NHS England will consider the impact of increasing the PrEP trial further.
35. **We will take action to improve the support for LGBT people with learning disabilities.** The Department of Health and Social Care will review, collate and disseminate existing best practice guidance and advice regarding LGBT issues and learning disability; and will also ensure that training requirements for support staff and advocates who work with people with learning disabilities includes advice regarding LGBT people.

## Education

36. **All LGBT people should feel welcomed and safe at school, college and university so that they can reach their full potential.** Existing evidence suggests that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying can have a disproportionate impact on LGBT young people<sup>3</sup>. It also shows that incidents of bullying are decreasing<sup>4</sup>, although any level of prejudice-based bullying is unacceptable and we are committed to tackling it. We are also committed to ensuring that LGBT teachers and people working in education are free to be themselves at work.
37. **The national LGBT survey asked respondents about their experiences in education.** We asked all respondents whether sexual orientation and gender identity were discussed during their education, and how well they felt this prepared them for later life. If respondents were in education in the academic year preceding the survey, we also asked them about how open they were about their LGBT status and any incidents they had experienced.
38. **A significant number of respondents had experienced a negative incident during their time in education.** Our survey found many people had been 'outed' without their consent, or been victims of verbal harassment in education. In addition, very few respondents felt that their education had prepared them for life as an LGBT person. Some of the most important findings were:
- a. In the last academic year, 21% of respondents in education had experienced a negative reaction involving someone disclosing their LGBT identity without their permission, and 19% involving verbal harassment, insults or other hurtful comments.
  - b. 21% of respondents recalled discussion of sexual orientation, gender identity or both at school, with younger respondents much more likely to do so than older respondents. Of those who did, however, only 9% felt this had prepared them well for later life as LGBT people, which did not vary remarkably by age.
  - c. 83% of the most serious incidents experienced by respondents within educational institutions in the last academic year were not reported, primarily because they considered them too minor, not serious enough or that they 'happen all the time'.
39. **We will take action so that our education system supports every LGBT child or young person.** We want LGBT children and young people to feel their education is relevant to their identity, and to be able to fully participate in their

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<sup>3</sup> NIESR (2016), 'Inequality among lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender groups in the UK July 2016'

<sup>4</sup> Stonewall (2017), 'School Report'

education without fear of bullying or harassment. We also want to see LGBT teachers supported to be role models for all children and young people.

## **What we will do**

40. **We will continue to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools and the wider education system.** The Government Equalities Office will complete its anti-homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying programme. This £3 million programme will reach more than 1,200 schools in England by March 2019. From March 2019 to March 2020, the Government Equalities Office will provide further funding for interventions in schools, and consider further projects to tackle bullying in further and higher education institutions. The Department for Education will work with the Government Equalities Office to understand how best to support schools to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and how to continue this programme of work in a sustainable way through the school curriculum and policies in the medium and to long term. The Crown Prosecution Service will review and update their LGBT Hate Crime Schools Pack in partnership with young LGBT people and identity-based bullying professionals to tackle bullying in schools.
41. **We will update Sex and Relationships Education guidance to support the Government's reforms to this subject.** As we have previously announced, the Department for Education will update the statutory guidance on Relationships Education in primary schools, and Relationships and Sex Education in secondary schools. These updates will ensure that the guidance supports teaching that is age appropriate and relevant to all pupils, whatever their developing sexual orientation or gender identity.
42. **We will ensure that schools have access to the guidance they need to support LGBT pupils.** The Department for Education will publish an update to its guidance for schools about how to apply the Equality Act 2010. In addition, the Government Equalities Office will work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to publish comprehensive guidance for schools on how to support trans pupils.
43. **We will support LGBT teachers to be themselves at work and improve the diversity of the teaching profession.** The Department for Education is investing £2 million to establish regional hubs to support teachers from underrepresented groups, including those teachers who are LGBT, to progress into leadership. The Department for Education has also already supported the launch of 'LGBTed' – a network for LGBT teachers and allies – and will continue to engage with stakeholders on making the teaching profession more LGBT inclusive.
44. **We will ensure that support is available for LGBT students who are victims of hate crime and online harassment.** The Government has asked the Office for Students to take steps to ensure that higher education providers are places of tolerance for all students. This includes working with higher

education providers, for example, by supporting work to ensure that students who have been a victim of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic incidents have the support in place that they need, through access to appropriately trained staff and signposting to local specialist organisations. The Office for Students will investigate and tackle gaps in participation, experience, safeguarding and success for LGBT students in higher education.

## Safety

45. **Everyone should be able to live their lives safely and to feel safe at home, out on the street, and online.** Hate crimes against lesbian, gay and bisexual people are the second most prevalent hate crime in the UK, and although reporting is increasing<sup>5</sup>, evidence suggests that LGBT people are reluctant to report incidents they experience<sup>6</sup>.
46. **The national LGBT survey asked questions about how open respondents were about their LGBT status and any incidents they had experienced that were motivated by prejudice towards them as an LGBT person.** We asked respondents both if they had experienced any incidents at home and if they had experienced incidents outside the home. We also asked about whether respondents had been offered or had undergone so-called 'conversion therapy' in an attempt to 'cure' them of being LGBT.
47. **Many respondents said they had experienced an incident committed by someone they did not live with, and the majority did not report it to anyone.** Our survey showed that, despite the progress made on LGBT rights in the UK, most respondents avoided being open about their LGBT identity in public because they feared a negative reaction from others. Some of the most important findings were that:
  - a. 40% of survey respondents had experienced a least one negative incident involving someone they did not live with, and 29% experienced at least one negative incident involving someone they did live with due to their LGBT status in the 12 months preceding the survey
  - b. More than 91% of respondents said the most serious incident they had experienced in the preceding 12 months had not been reported
  - c. 2% of respondents had undergone conversion therapy in an attempt to 'cure' them of being LGBT, and a further 5% had been offered it
48. **We will act so that LGBT people feel safe in their own homes and in their communities.** We want LGBT people to feel comfortable reporting incidents they experience, and we are not prepared to stand idly by as harmful practices such as conversion therapy happen in our country.

## What we will do

49. **We will bring forward proposals to end the practice of conversion therapy in the UK.** These activities are wrong, and we are not willing to let them continue. Led by the Government Equalities Office, we will fully consider all legislative and non-legislative options to prohibit promoting, offering or

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<sup>5</sup> Home Office. October 2017. "Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2016/17."

<sup>6</sup> NIESR (2016), 'Inequality among lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender groups in the UK July 2016'

conducting conversion therapy. Our intent is protect people who are vulnerable to harm or violence, whether that occurs in a medical, commercial or faith-based context. We are not trying to prevent LGBT people from seeking legitimate medical support or spiritual support from their faith leader in the exploration of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

50. **We will improve the police response to hate crime and raise awareness of local support agencies for LGBT victims.** The Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will refresh the 2016 Hate Crime Action Plan later this year. The refreshed Hate Crime Action Plan will include measures to improve the awareness and skills of police officers and staff to respond to the needs of hate crime victims – including LGBT victims. The Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will also fund a bespoke training package available to all police call handlers to help ensure victims are correctly identified and supported at this critical first point of contact. The refreshed plan will also set out action to support local agencies, particularly the police, to ensure they are well placed to direct victims of hate crime to appropriate support-services. The refreshed plan will aim to support partners to review and assess the coverage and awareness of local services in their areas. This summer, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services will publish the findings of its inspection of English and Welsh police forces’ effectiveness at identifying, recording, and responding to reports of hate crime. The Government is also looking at the responses to the National LGBT survey about hate crime legislation and will consider this and other evidence as part of the Hate Crime Action Plan refresh.
51. **We will improve recording and reporting for victims of hate crime and domestic abuse.** The Crown Prosecution Service will work with the LGBT stakeholders and specialist press to raise awareness of successfully prosecuted cases involving LGBT victims to increase confidence in reporting crimes. The Crown Prosecution Service will work with partners to improve the recording and monitoring of equalities data for LGBT victims of domestic abuse, rape and hate crime.
52. **We will address domestic abuse of LGBT people with multiple and complex needs.** The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has a Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy commitment to improve services for victims of domestic abuse with complex needs, which can include mental ill-health and substance misuse, and is working across government to ensure the needs of LGBT victims are represented. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will also announce further significant funding for domestic abuse services across England, including refuges, as early as possible this financial year. In addition, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government are carrying out a comprehensive review of the funding and commissioning of domestic abuse services across England. The review will be informed by an audit, which will give us a picture of provision across England, including support for LGBT victims of domestic abuse,

enabling government to assess what impact services are having and to identify any gaps in provision.

53. **We have collected evidence on the barriers faced by LGBT victims of domestic abuse when seeking support and we will consider how to address them as part of the Government's wider work on Domestic Abuse.** The Government's consultation on 'Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse' sought views on what steps can be taken forward through our landmark draft Domestic Abuse Bill and supporting non-legislative package. The consultation sought views on what government can do to better support victims who face multiple barriers to accessing support including, LGBT victims of domestic abuse. The Home Office will work with the Government Equalities Office to ensure the non-legislative package fully considers the needs of LGBT victims.
54. **We will increase awareness of support services for LGBT victims of sexual assault and abuse.** NHS England will work with the police to increase awareness of services provided by Sexual Assault Referral Centres for LGBT victims and survivors who face additional barriers to reporting sexual assault and abuse. In April 2018, NHS England published the 'Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services – Lifelong care for Victims and Survivors: 2018-2023'. This strategy outlines how NHS England and agencies will improve the whole care pathway for victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse over a lifetime. NHS England are also committed to having LGBT representation on the National Patient Participation Group for Sexual Assault Referral Centres.
55. **We will work to understand the causes of LGBT homelessness and how we can better support LGBT homeless people's needs.** From April 2018, local authorities have started collecting case-level data, through the Homelessness Case Level Information Collection data system, on the sexual orientation and gender identity of homeless people. We will analyse this data in order to better understand the nature and scale of the problem of LGBT homelessness, as well as how well frontline staff support individuals. The Government Equalities Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will undertake qualitative research into the experiences of LGBT homeless people as well as conducting an audit of existing service provision. Non-statutory guidance for local authorities will be produced, raising awareness of the needs of LGBT homeless people and ways to better support them. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will ensure that LGBT homeless people's needs are reflected across the Government's forthcoming rough sleeping strategy.
56. **We will make sure that victims of crime continue to have access to support services, to help them cope with and, as far as possible, recover from the effects of crime.** This year, the Ministry of Justice is providing around £96 million to support victims of crime; around £68 million of this will be allocated to 42 Police and Crime Commissioners to locally commission or provide support services for victims of crime, including LGBT victims. In

previous years, some Police and Crime Commissioners spent some of their grant funding on specific projects for LGBT victims. In 2018 to 2019 LGBT-specific providers will continue to deliver a range of services, including counselling, advocacy and befriending services to LGBT victims of hate crime, sexual violence and domestic violence.

57. **We will continue our work to ensure that the needs of all LGBT claimants are met in the asylum process, regardless of whether their claim was lodged on this basis.** While the national LGBT survey did not ask questions about the asylum process, we remain committed to granting protection to all claimants who are found to be at risk of persecution or serious harm in their country of origin because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The Home Office guidance for caseworkers on processing asylum claims on the basis of sexual orientation will be reviewed shortly. The Home Office will also publish guidance on asylum claims based on gender identity and expression in the summer. The Home Office published data on asylum claims made on the basis of sexual orientation for the first time in November 2017 and is committed to re-publishing annually. The Home Office will continue to review the training of immigration detention estate and healthcare staff to ensure that the specific needs of LGBT detainees are consistently met.
58. **We will ensure that the UK is the safest place in the world for all users, including LGBT people, to be online.** The Government response to the Internet Safety Strategy, published in May 2018, set out details of our new code of practice with guidance for social media providers. The code will help ensure that clear and transparent reporting processes are in place so that users can report abuse targeting LGBT people. We are also introducing transparency reporting for social media providers. These reports will help us understand the amount of LGBT-related abuse reported and how providers deal with these reports. The Government response also announced that the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Home Office would jointly work on a White Paper, to be published later this year. The White Paper will set out our proposals for future legislation that will cover the full range of online harms, including both harmful and illegal content. Potential areas where the Government will legislate include the social media code of practice, transparency reporting and online advertising.
59. **We will ensure LGBT young people have access to educational online safety interventions that address their needs and are informed by their experiences.** The National Crime Agency's 'Digital Romance' report showed that higher proportions of LGBT young people meet partners online. It also found that significantly more lesbian and gay young people had met up with an online contact who was not who they said they were. The National Crime Agency will develop effective and appropriate education interventions to ensure LGBT young people can be full, equal and safe participants in online activity and communities, and benefit from the full potential of digital technologies. This will include identifying areas of intervention to ensure young people develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to stay safe online. They will work with LGBT

young people, professionals and parents to develop the interventions and resources.

60. **We will ensure that transgender prisoners are treated fairly, decently, lawfully with their rights respected.** Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service will continue to work with its advisory board to further review its Agency Instruction on the care and management of transgender offenders. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service will commission research and will work collaboratively with partner organisations to better understand the transgender prison population and those serving sentences in the community, which will inform our ongoing work. We will consider the recommendations of the 'Inside Gender Identity' report into the health and social care needs of transgender offenders.

## Workplace

61. **LGBT people should be able to be themselves in the workplace, so that they can do their best work and get on in life.** Existing evidence suggests that the discrimination, harassment and bullying that disproportionately affect LGBT people in various aspects of their lives continues to be an issue in the workplace<sup>7</sup>. This is true for those with minority sexual orientations and even more so for those with minority gender identities.
62. **The national LGBT survey asked questions about people's experiences of being LGBT in the workplace.** We asked respondents whether they were in paid work in the 12 months preceding the survey, whether they were open about being LGBT at work, and whether they had experienced any discrimination in the workplace.
63. **A majority of respondents had a positive or neutral reaction when they were open about being LGBT at work, but some said they had experienced a negative reaction due to being LGBT.** Our survey showed that too many LGBT people feel unable to be themselves at work and that the majority of incidents in the workplace were left unreported. Some of the most important findings were:
  - a. 23% of survey respondents employed in the 12 months preceding the survey had experienced a negative or mixed reaction from others in the workplace due to being LGBT or thought to be LGBT
  - b. 11% of those in work had experienced a negative reaction in the 12 months preceding the survey due to someone disclosing that they were LGBT without their permission, 11% due to other inappropriate comments or conduct and 9% due to verbal harassment, insults or other hurtful comments
  - c. 77% of respondents that had experienced a negative incident in work in the preceding 12 months said the most serious incident was not reported, primarily because they had thought it would not be worth it, or that nothing would happen or change
64. **We want to see positive action being taken across sectors to ensure the UK is the best place to work as an LGBT person.** We know that people who work in inclusive environments are more likely to fulfil their potential; we want every workplace to be an inclusive workplace.

## What we will do

65. **We will provide employers with free training materials to support inclusion in the workplace.** The Government Equalities Office will develop a

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<sup>7</sup> NIESR (2016), 'Inequality among lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender groups in the UK July 2016'

training package to help employers and employees deal with LGBT discrimination in the workplace. The package will be available for organisations to adapt by organisations for their individual needs.

66. **We will continue to take action on sexual harassment in the workplace.** The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service and the Government Equalities Office will ensure that LGBT harassment is included in sexual harassment policies and guidance they issue.
67. **We will convene a working group of employers to understand the experiences of LGBT staff in different sectors.** Whilst great progress has been made on LGBT equality at work, not all sectors of the economy have seen the same progress. The Government Equalities Office will work with employers to develop targeted interventions to improve the experience of LGBT people at work.
68. **The Civil Service will continue to role model best practice in establishing working environments that are inclusive for LGBT staff in accordance with the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.** We will continue our work to review and strengthen how we tackle bullying, harassment and misconduct in the Civil Service, implementing and building on the review carried out between Autumn 2017 and Summer 2018.

## Rights and the law

69. **The UK has a proud record of defending and extending LGBT rights both at home and abroad.** We continue to be recognised as one of the best countries in Europe for LGBT rights by ILGA-Europe.
70. **The national LGBT survey asked trans people questions about the legal gender recognition process, and invited responses from non-binary and intersex people.** These questions have provided valuable insight into the experiences of trans and intersex people. Some of the most important findings were:
- 81% of trans men and women were aware of the process to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate; however, knowledge of the precise requirements was mixed -- for example, 15% mistakenly thought that surgery was a requirement and 43% thought an interview with a Gender Recognition Panel was needed
  - the most frequently given reasons by trans men and women for not having applied for a Gender Recognition Certificate were not satisfying the requirements (44%), finding the process too bureaucratic (38%), and the process being too expensive (34%)
  - only 7% of the respondents who were aware of Gender Recognition Certificates but who did not have one said they were not interested in getting one
  - intersex respondents were more likely to have been unsuccessful when trying to access mental health services (13%) than respondents who were not intersex (8%), and more likely to say that accessing them was not at all easy (37%) compared to respondents who were not intersex (28%)
  - 11% of intersex respondents said that accessing sexual health services had not been at all easy, compared to 5% of respondents who were not intersex; the main reasons given were that they were worried, anxious or embarrassed about going (12%), had to wait too long (11%), or weren't able to go at a convenient time (10%)
71. **Despite the significant advances the UK has made in achieving equality for LGBT people in the last 50 years, we know there is still more to do.** We want to ensure the law reflects the true needs of LGBT people. We also want to ensure that LGBT people are aware of the rights they do have already.

## What we will do

72. **We will consult on how best to reform the gender recognition process.** Last year, the Government Equalities Office announced the intention to consult on the Gender Recognition Act 2004 to see how the legal gender recognition process can be made less bureaucratic and intrusive. The consultation will be

published alongside this action plan, and we will use the results of the national LGBT survey and the consultation to bring forward proposals for reforming this public service.

73. **We will consider ways to make it easier to tell the government if you have changed your gender.** The Government Equalities Office will investigate whether the 'Tell Us Once' service – which is currently used to notify government departments of bereavements – can be learned from so that transgender people who are transitioning and want to update their name and gender across multiple departments only have to do so once.
74. **We will improve our understanding of issues facing non-binary people.** The Government Equalities Office will launch a Call for Evidence on the issues faced by non-binary people, building on the findings from the national LGBT survey.
75. **We will also improve our understanding of the issues facing people who are intersex.** The Government Equalities Office will launch a separate Call for Evidence to improve the evidence relating to intersex people's experiences.
76. **We will ensure that LGBT people can easily access information they need about their rights.** The Government Digital Service will review the existing content on GOV.UK aimed at LGBT people, and improve the content to ensure that it fully meets their needs.

## Data and monitoring

77. **Being LGBT makes a difference to your health and wellbeing, your likelihood to be a victim of certain kinds of crime, and your education.** Good public services are designed with data, but many services do not routinely monitor sexual orientation or gender identity. Those parts of government that do monitor these protected characteristics do not do so consistently. Sexual orientation and gender identity monitoring can help public service providers to better understand and cater for the needs of people who are LGBT, as well as people who are not. Better data leads to better services.
78. **The national LGBT survey asked some questions about whether respondents had disclosed their sexual orientation in healthcare.** A majority of respondents had disclosed their sexual orientation; those who did not most frequently said it was because they thought it wasn't relevant. Of those who chose to disclose, most respondents felt it had a positive or neutral effect on their care. The main findings were:
- a. more than half of respondents with a minority sexual orientation had disclosed or discussed their sexual orientation with healthcare staff some, most or all of the time in the 12 months preceding the survey
  - b. the most frequently stated reason for not having disclosed or discussed sexual orientation with healthcare staff was that respondents did not think it was relevant
79. **We want to ensure that government services monitor these protected characteristics in a consistent, respectful and proportionate way.** It is not necessary for every government service to ask these questions; where the evidence suggests it is, we want to ensure that monitoring is done consistently and well and that LGBT people feel comfortable disclosing their identities.

### What we will do

80. **We will enable government services to appropriately monitor sexual orientation and gender identity.** The Government Equalities Office, the Office for National Statistics and the Government Statistical Service will work together on a cross-government project to develop monitoring standards for sexual orientation and gender identity across central government. These standards will be freely available to the wider public and private sectors. The Government Equalities Office and Office for National Statistics will provide guidance and support to departments looking to implement monitoring in their services to ensure that it is consistent, proportionate and safe.
81. **We will ensure the Civil Service is an exemplar employer for collecting data on sexual orientation and gender identity in a sensitive, respectful and proportionate way.** Civil Service HR, the Office for National Statistics and the Government Equalities Office will work to develop standardised questions for inclusion in internal departmental systems such as human resources

systems for government employees. Civil Service HR will continue to include questions on sexual orientation and gender identity in the annual Civil Service People Survey so that the diverse workplace experiences of civil servants can be better understood.

82. **We will provide guidance on protecting private data concerning the characteristics and history of transgender people.** The Government Equalities Office will work with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and other agencies to agree guidance for public and private sector organisations explaining how they can protect these data and ensure the privacy of trans people. The guidance will help organisations to comply with relevant legislation such as the General Data Protection Regulation and the Gender Recognition Act 2004.
83. **In line with the Government’s approach to open data,<sup>8</sup> we will explore how best to make as much of the national LGBT survey data available as possible.** We realise that the data we have collected is rich and comprehensive. We will not share or publish any data from which individuals can be identified, but the Government Equalities Office will look to publish more aggregate-level, anonymous data which will be of use to researchers, academics, stakeholders, the media, policy makers and the public at large.
84. **We will undertake further work to improve our understanding of the needs of specific groups within the LGBT population.** The Government Equalities Office will look to improve the evidence base relating to the experiences of groups including older people, people in care, people with disabilities and long-term conditions, and black and minority ethnic people.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://data.gov.uk/about>

## Representation

85. **There are increasingly more LGBT people in the public eye, helping to normalise the experiences of LGBT people and tackle homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.** The existing evidence base shows that acceptance of same-sex relationships among the general public is at a record high and continues to increase, with 64% of the British public saying same-sex relationships were ‘not wrong at all’ in 2016, up from 47% in 2012, and 11% in 1987.<sup>9</sup> Despite this, our survey showed that many LGBT people do not feel comfortable being themselves in the UK.
86. **The national LGBT survey asked respondents whether they were open about their identity.** Our survey asked respondents with a minority sexual orientation if they avoided holding hands with a same-sex partner in public and if they were open about their sexual orientation. We also asked trans respondents if they avoided being open about their gender identity.
87. **Despite the increasing acceptance of LGBT people, our survey found that survey respondents routinely engaged in avoidance behaviour.** The major findings from the LGBT survey were that:
- 68% of respondents with a minority sexual orientation said they had avoided holding hands with a same-sex partner in public
  - 70% of respondents with a minority sexual orientation said they had avoided being open about their sexual orientation for fear of a negative reaction from others
  - 67% of trans respondents said they had avoided being open about their gender identity
88. **We want to build a society that accepts everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.** We want LGBT people to feel comfortable being authentically themselves in public, and to not feel like they have to hide who they are.

## What we will do

89. **We will trial innovative ways of tackling deep-seated prejudices in our communities.** The Government Equalities Office will work across the public, private and voluntary sectors to improve the representation of LGBT people in public life, championing role models and giving people the confidence to be themselves in public. The Government Equalities Office will also look at how behavioural insights can be used to help improve people’s attitudes toward LGBT people more quickly.

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<sup>9</sup> NatCen Social Research (2017) *British Social Attitudes 34*

90. **We will support the important role of local pride events across the UK.** The Government Equalities Office will continue to have a presence at Pride events across the country, allowing us to hear directly from LGBT people. The Civil Service will demonstrate its own commitment to becoming the UK's most inclusive employer by having a presence at Pride events each year and by supporting departmental staff networks and all staff across gender, ethnicity, faith and belief, age and disability to engage with these events.
91. **We will work to address harmful gender stereotypes and gender norms.** The Government Equalities Office will work with the media and with schools to challenge gender stereotypes, and will also develop the evidence on the cause and impact of gender norms.
92. **We will continue our work to increase LGBT inclusion in sport and physical activity.** Following the publication of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's 'Sporting Future' strategy for sport and physical activity, Sport England are providing expert help to sporting organisations to increase the participation of LGBT people in sport and physical activity. Sport England are also working to improve LGBT access to sport and physical activity as spectators, as volunteers and in the workforce. It is working alongside National Governing Bodies of sport and LGBT-focused sports organisations on a number of equality initiatives aimed at LGBT inclusion, and it is also working with a number of partners across the leisure industry, including the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity, to develop guidance on trans inclusion for frontline leisure industry staff. Sport England will also monitor the representation of LGBT people in senior leadership alongside other elements of diversity, following the launch of the Code for Sport Governance in October 2016. Following Sport England's investment in a study by Pride Sports to identify how to better support LGBT inclusion in sport, Sport England will consider the recommendations of the research.

## International

93. **While the UK is a global leader on LGBT rights, we know there is more to do around the world to support LGBT people.** We are heartened by the progress that many countries are making, and welcome the work highlighted at the recent Commonwealth summit in London to move towards a more equal world for LGBT people.
94. **The national LGBT survey did not ask any specific questions about international issues, but many respondents chose to talk about them in the open free-text response.** We do know that consensual same-sex acts are still illegal in 72 countries and punishable by death in eight, and that 37 out of 53 Commonwealth countries still criminalise consensual same-sex acts.
95. **We believe LGBT people around the world deserve at least the same rights and respect that we enjoy in the UK and that the UK has a special responsibility to address laws discriminating against LGBT people in the Commonwealth.** We will continue to defend and promote the rights of LGBT people globally.

## What we will do

96. **We will support countries that want help to repeal laws discriminating against LGBT people.** The Prime Minister has offered support to Commonwealth countries wishing to reform discriminatory legislation. A £5.6 million programme delivered through civil society organisations will advance the legal equality and rights of all Commonwealth citizens, regardless of gender, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity.
97. **We will deliver an international conference focusing on the issues LGBT people face around the world.** The conference will highlight a range of issues with governments, civil society and other key stakeholders on how best to progress LGBT equality.
98. **We will provide better travel advice for LGBT people.** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will continue to update and regularly review our travel advice for LGBT people. In particular, we will work with partners to ensure that our advice to trans travellers going abroad for medical treatment is as informative and up-to-date as possible. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will ensure that issues specific to LGBT travellers are addressed in travel advice communications.
99. **We will promote LGBT rights through multilateral organisations, the private sector and international civil society organisations.** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will continue to work through UK embassies, high commissions and through international organisations, including the United Nations, European institution and the Commonwealth, to protect and promote LGBT rights and to address laws discriminating against LGBT people. The UK will consider putting in a bid to co-chair the Equal Rights Coalition in 2019.

100. **We will provide funding to promote LGBT equality worldwide.** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy has committed £1.1 million to support LGBT rights projects worldwide in 2018 and 2019. The Government Equalities Office will provide match funding to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development work on reviewing LGBT inclusiveness. As part of the Department for International Development's new funding mechanism – UK Aid Connect – and in recognition of the importance of global LGBT inclusion, the Department for International Development will provide up to £12 million over four years, from 2018 to 2022, for a consortium of organisations to work together to promote LGBT inclusion.

## Next steps

101. **We are committed to tackling the burning injustices that LGBT people face in their everyday lives.** The commitments we have made in this action plan help us to start to do that.
102. **We aim to deliver the commitments in this action plan by the end of this Parliament.** We have allocated funding up until March 2020 to deliver the plan and we will look to secure additional funding beyond March 2020 when departmental budgets are set later in the Parliament.
103. **To help us guide and deliver this plan, we will establish a new LGBT Advisory Panel for government.** The Minister for Women and Equalities will appoint the membership for the group and it will comprise representatives from civil society. The panel will advise on LGBT issues that we have an interest in.
104. **We will enable Parliament to play a full role in helping to advance LGBT equality.** We will provide annual updates to the Women and Equalities Select Committee, explaining our progress against this plan. This will ensure that Parliament can hold us to our word that we will defend, extend and promote the rights and freedoms of LGBT people here and abroad.
105. **Whilst this is a national action plan, it covers some policy areas that are devolved.** It will have varying levels of effect across the four nations of the UK, owing to existing devolution arrangements. The majority of the commitments in this action plan will have effect in England only, since policy areas such as health and education are fully devolved to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Some commitments, such as those on justice, policing and gender recognition, will have effect in Wales as well. Other commitments, for example on ending conversion therapy, will require a UK-wide approach.
106. **The funding for this action plan applies to England only, and does not affect the funding arrangements in other parts of the UK.** Only organisations based in England or operating nationwide will be able to access the funding GEO is making available to deliver specific projects.
107. **The UK Government is committed to working closely with the governments of the devolved administrations on the delivery of the commitments in this action plan.** We will explore ways of collaborating to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all LGBT people across every part of the UK.

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